

LIBERTY OR SLAVERY,  
THE ONLY QUESTION.

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ORATION:

DELIVERED ON THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1856,

AT

JAMESTOWN, CHAUTAUQUE CO.,  
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BY

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OF SYRACUSE, N. Y.

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1856.

# ORATION.

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From our childhood, we have been wont to look forward to the 4th of July, as a day for universal rejoicing—a national jubilee. On the return of this anniversary, the people of our land have yearly summoned their orators and poets to set forth for renewed admiration, the glorious principles proclaimed by the fathers of our Republic; and to recount the heroic deeds and more heroic sufferings of the Revolution, by which the yoke imposed by a foreign monarch was broken, and the people took into their own hands the reins of civil government. Their Declaration of Independence, signed as with their heart's blood eighty years ago to day, and sent forth throughout the land as the tongue of flame summoning all men to the conflict for their inalienable rights—that world renowned Declaration, we have been wont to listen to reverently, among the solemnities of this occasion, as if it were the great revelation of the prerogatives and the duties of Man. No exultation has been deemed excessive on this day of our nation's birth. And from one end to the other of our land, men, women and children of all ages and degrees have abandoned themselves to joy.

But a change, sad change, has come over us. The note of humiliation rather than of pride is heard through-

out the land. Discord reigns at the seat of our government. The din of hostile bands is heard in one of our territories. Destruction is in our borders. Dissolution is working at the heart of our Republic.

“ We may not, must not now rejoice,  
Nor of past triumphs tell,  
Hushed be the canuon’s thundering voice,  
And muffled every bell,  
Dissolved in tears, prone in the dust,  
For mercy let us pray,  
That judgments on us may not burst,  
On Independence day.”

“ Men and brethren,” is the out-cry every where, “ what shall we do to be saved ” from the calamity that is impending over us. Tell us the cause, that we may do what we can to avert the consequences. You shall have my answer.

A seed of evil, a root of bitterness, our fathers left in the soil, when they planted our tree of Liberty.— And that root has sprung up, (as you have seen a vine in your forest) has wound round the trunk, spread out upon the branches, over-topped the tree, covering it with another foliage, taking to itself all the nourishment from the soil, from the sunlight and the air ; sapping by degrees the strength that upholds it, and distilling from every leaf that poison which is its life.

Thus unhappily, two inconsistent, antagonistic, utterly irreconcilable elements were suffered to enter into the composition of these States—*Liberty* and *Slavery*.— These are as dissimilar as light and darkness, heat and cold, right and wrong, Christ and Belial, God and the Devil. I may not now enter into any detailed account

of the origin and progress of the attempt to make this unhallowed and impossible compound. I may only allude to a few facts.

Domestic servitude having long existed in all the American Colonies, which at the Revolution, became States, was then regarded with less abhorrence generally, than it now is in that portion of these states, from which it has been for more than half a century excluded. The sensibility of the people was then also perhaps somewhat deadened by the political subjugation, to which they had been themselves accustomed, as colonists. But the spirit of humanity which was roused to throw off the yoke, that had been fastened upon their own necks, did not fail to whisper to their consciences, that there was an egregious inconsistency, as well as wrong, in their keeping a heavier yoke upon the necks of their weaker brethren. They yielded to the suggestion—and all the states north of Mason and Dixon's line soon after abolished slavery. It seemed too as if the same result were about to follow in the states further south, from the operation of the same influences. In Virginia, Maryland and North Carolina, speeches were made in public assemblies, and printed in the public papers, denouncing slavery almost as emphatically as any modern Abolitionist would denounce it. In Virginia alone, between the years 1782 and 1791, there were *more than ten thousand slaves set at liberty.* And it was confidently expected by the philanthropists of that day, that the spirit of freedom then abroad in the land—working together with the growing perception of the poor economy of slave labor, would tend to the deliverance of all the oppressed.

Beguiled by this false hope, the delegates in the Convention of 1787, that formed our present Constitution, were misled into that compact which (to use the strong language of Isaiah) has proved to be "a covenant with death, and an agreement with hell." In deference to South Carolina and Georgia, which were not ready for universal emancipation; and in deference to the cupidity of certain merchants of New York, Massachusetts and Rhode Island, too readily did that Convention agree to the admission of such articles into the constitution, as virtually allowed the prosecution of the African Slave Trade until 1808; and the continuance of slavery in any of the states, so long as the people of those states might choose. True, the word is not to be found in that document, but the *virus* of slavery was left there; and thence has been disseminated that foul disease, which has filled our whole body politic with "wounds and bruises and putrifying sores, so that from the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it, but the whole head is sick and the whole heart faint."

Persuaded too easily to believe, that the evil would work its own cure, if let alone, if left with those—the ~~the~~ masters and slaves—who were directly suffering under its operation, the people of the free states for years confined their attention to their own affairs, until roused from their false security by the daring encroachments, which the slave-holders had made upon the liberties of every member of the Union. While the people of the Northern States were busily engaged in establishing seminaries of learning, religion and benevolence; in developing the resources of their part of the common heritage; tilling the land, plowing the ocean, harnessing

the rivers to their machinery, building canals and railroads, teaching steam to work for them, and learning how to send messages on the wings of lightning; the slaveholders, in the midst of their many more and greater advantages, were only contriving how to secure and extend their dominion over fellow men, binding heavy burdens and laying them upon the shoulders of the poor and defenceless, subordinating to themselves every other class of men, and making all things subservient to their worse than feudal tyrannies.

By the fertile ingenuity of New England, in 1792, a machine—the *Cotton Gin*—was invented, which so facilitated the preparation of cotton for market, that that product of the southern states became the great staple of our country—the *chief article of our export*. This gave to the slaveholders a power, which they have wielded to the subjugation of the rich men of the North, scarcely less than of the poor men of the South. So that it has become a bitter joke that “Cotton is our King.”

Then in 1803, the annexation of the whole territory west of the Mississippi River, threw open to their occupancy a boundless region of virgin soil, on which alone the labor of slaves is profitable. Out of this they have already carved three slave states; and now, at the expense of their plighted faith, and at the hazard of a civil war, are endeavoring to carve another.

There is not time for me here, to show you in detail the instruments and artifices, by which the slaveholders have well-nigh accomplished their fell purposes; converted our Republic into a despotism; making Democ-

racy to mean nothing else than utter subserviency to a few ruthless Oligarchs.

Being united in their policy ~~respecting~~ their "peculiar Institution," they have always been able, whenever there was an occasion for it, to bring all their state to acts with one accord. This has given them an immense influence over "the politics" of our nation. Their influence has indeed become almost absolute, because of the diverse interests of the Northern people, commercial on the one hand, and manufacturing on the other. These have broken us into parties, which the slaveholders have adroitly played against each other, so as always to subserve their purpose.

At length the northern manufacturers, even more than the northern merchants, became interested in the production of cotton, and so it has been only too easy for the slaveholders to raise a standing army in our very midst, always ready to fight their battles for them. Cotton bales, by order of General Jackson, on the 8th of January, 1815, were piled into breast works at New Orleans; and behind them the American Army repulsed more than double their number, and averted the destruction of that city. Equally true is it, that the advances of the anti-slavery host have hitherto been withstood mainly by the array of northern merchants and manufacturers, devoted to the interests of cotton growers.

In 1835, I went to New York to attend the second annual meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society. A prominent merchant in that emporium of trade, took me aside and said, "I have no doubt that the intention of your Society is good. The principles that

you avow are abstractly right. Any body with a grain of sense may see that holding a man in slavery is wrong. But" he continued with passionate emphasis, "we cannot afford to let your enterprise succeed. Why there are millions and millions of dollars now due from slaveholders to the merchants of New-York, and hundreds of millions more that are invested directly or indirectly in our trade with the South. We cannot afford, sir, to let you succeed. We shall put you down. We shall crush you." I am happy to add, that the last aggressions of the slave power, the outrages in Kansas, and in Congress, have changed that gentleman's feelings. I found him a few weeks ago, among thousands of the "conservatives" and "union-savers" of New York, ready to let the millions and the Union slide, rather than bend any lower, submit any more.

The spirit which impelled that gentleman to address me as he did in 1835, had already shown itself in determined opposition to the cause of Liberty, and soon after broke out in acts of violence, which are only too well remembered.

Intimidation is one of the expedients to which slaveholders, and their minions, have resorted from the beginning. The threat to dissolve the union, unless they were permitted to make the union subservient to their "Peculiar Institution," for a long while served to keep our northern merchants and manufacturers on the alert to do the bidding of their masters, that they might save the union, which with them meant 'the trade of the South.'

Letters filled with terrible denunciations, yes, threats



of assassination were sent to the prominent abolitionists. Even large rewards, \$5,000, \$10,000, \$20,000 were offered by the legislatures of several states for the murder or abduction of such men as William Lloyd Garrison, Arthur Tappan and Amos A. Phelps.

Every expedient that could be devised, was plied especially to prevent the introduction of the subject of slavery into either house of Congress. Petitions having any bearing upon it were rudely thrust out, or thrown under the table. Every northern man who dared to present such a petition, or to say a word on the subject, was set upon with violent abuse, and threats of personal chastisement. The gallant Mr. Giddings, because he would not be intimidated by their threats, was expelled from the House of Representatives for alleged disrespect: expelled only to return forthwith, with new assurances of the confidence of his constituents and an increased determination to battle for the Right.

Even the venerable John Quincy Adams was assailed on every side, because he merely insisted that the right of Petition should be respected by Congress, even when exercised by Abolitionists. They reviled, they threatened, until they roused "the Lion of the Tribe of Adams." The old man eloquent rose in the might of his holy indignation, his consummate knowledge, his forensic skill, his parliamentary tact, and with the naked sword of truth, with a point of terrible rebuke, and an edge of scathing satire, routed all his assailants, and made himself master of the field.

But too many of the Representatives and Senators from the free states succumbed, bowed and held their

peace. There have, however always been some men in in each Branch of Congress, who could not be intimidated, and would not keep silent. Besides those already named, there have been Messrs. Palfrey and Mann, and Culver, and Naylor, and Smith, and Granger in the House; and Seward, and Chase, and Hale, and Wade, and Willson and Sumner in the Senate, who have maintained their ground, and have uttered memorable words in the cause of Liberty and Humanity.

The last named gentleman, from his first entrance into Congress has been regarded by the champions of the slaveholding oligarchy with especial dislike; marked as the man of all others (excepting perhaps Mr. Seward) to be circumvented, undermined, overthrown—disposed of in one way or another

Mr. Sumner is a gentleman of irreproachable character—pure in all his personal habits, given to none of the vices to which it is notorious, so many members of Congress addict themselves. Always at his post, during the few hours each day, that the Senate devotes to business; and at other times engaged in such studies as increase continually his qualifications for his high office. He wastes neither his own time, nor the time of the commonwealth he represents, in the frivolities of fashion, much less in the debaucheries, which, I am grieved to say, abound at our Capital. Mr. Sumner is a man of imposing presence, of noble bearing, of high intellectual powers and scholarly attainments—rich in his varied stores of classical, historical and poetic, as well as legal lore. He is a man of cordial manners, generous impulses, kindly feelings, a pacific spirit, and withal of com-

manding eloquence. Yet all these accomplishments and graces avail nothing in the estimation of the Southern Chivalry, because he is opposed to slavery. Nay, his many excellencies make him all the more the object of their hate, because they empower him all the more to do valiant deeds, in conflicting for the right. So from the very first time that he intimated his dislike of their peculiar institution, the slaveholders, particularly Messrs. Butler, Mason and Tombs, have continually annoyed, insulted and threatened him.

I was present in the Senate Chamber on the 13th May, and heard the concluding part of Mr. Cass' speech. At the close of it, Mr. Sumner announced his intention to address the Senate, in answer to the gentleman, who had just then taken his seat, and to several others, who had spoken upon the same side of the Kansas question. Intimations of displeasure were plainly given, and taunts were thrown at him, which he parried with dignity and good humor. My engagements elsewhere did not allow me to tarry in Washington, until the 19th and 20th to hear his speech. You all I trust have read it. If any have not, let them not presume, from the treatment he has since received, to suppose that there is a sentence or word in it, that could justify (if any thing could justify) or reasonably provoke that treatment. "It was" I use the words of another who is not easily satisfied—"It was perfect in its conception, arrangement and execution; conclusive in its argument and evidence; masterly in its exposure of executive usurpation, sublime in its moral heroism; invincible in its truthfulness; just in its personal im-

peachment ; unsurpassed in its eloquence ; and glorious in its object."

That there were no violations of propriety in all that long speech of five hours continuance, no breaches of the decorum of debate, we are assured *on the unanimous testimony of the august body itself to whom it was addressed*. For not once was he checked by the President, or called to order by either of the Senators. Eager as they were to catch him in his words, ready as they were to take offence, he gave them no pretext for stopping him. Wounded to the quick those enemies of all righteousness—the champions of slaveholders—undoubtedly often were by what he said ; harrowed to the bottom of their souls by his terrible rebukes, we must suppose they were ; ground to powder they must at times have felt themselves and their speeches to be, by the huge pile of facts, and the weight of arguments, that he heaped upon them. Yet not one of them found an occasion for calling him to order. With all their itching ears, they heard not a word, that would warrant their appeal to the President for protection from the *burning lava of truth* ; that Mr. Sumner was pouring upon them. Let then, the servile creatures of the slaveholding oligarchy say what they will of the provocation, Mr Sumner gave for the assault, that was made upon his life, they are estopped in their attempt to justify or palliate that assault, by the fact that *no member of the Senate* found an occasion, during the delivery of that speech even to call him to order.

Two days afterwards, when the Senate had adjourned and all the members who were friendly to him had left

the Hall, Mr. Sumner was sitting at his desk, intently engaged in writing. He was closely confined by the desk, over which he was bending, and the strong arms of the chair in which he was seated. There, alone unarmed—for northern *gentlemen* do not carry arms—unprotected by the presence of any who were disposed or were near enough to shield him; wholly off his guard, not suspecting there could be any man about him *so mean, so brutal, so cowardly* as to attack him there; thus the Massachusetts Senator was sitting in the place, which if all places in our country ought to be held sacred to liberty of speech—the very inner temple as it should be of our freedom—thus he sat, when a ruffian, a border ruffian he deserves to be called, though his home is in South Carolina,—a border ruffian he certainly is, for his spirit belongs to the outermost verge of civilization—a border ruffian came upon Mr. Sumner and dealt a blow upon his defenceless head, which stunned him; then other blows in quick succession, felling him to the floor, and mangling his person, after he was down.—There is reason to believe that, had not the ruffian been taken off, he would have completed the assassination. He went to the perpetration of the deed, accompanied by another member of the House of Representatives, and he did it in the presence of several senators of slaveholding states, who lifted not a finger to stay him. So there is too much reason to believe that P. S. Brooks was but the agent of a conspiracy, as Mr. Benton pronounced it. The procedure of the Senate in reference to the outrage confirms us in the apprehension, that it was a conspiracy; and that a larger number of the Senators were in the conspiracy than the few, who witnessed

the execution of their plot. Instead of allowing the President of their body, as usual, to appoint the committee of investigation, they choose to do it themselves; and they put upon it not one, who was friendly to the injured party. Then the report of that committee was such as to ensure the criminal immunity from punishment, by leaving the case in the hands of the House of Representatives, where, as they knew full well, the requisite vote would not be given against him.

But, we trust, the God of justice and mercy has not wholly forsaken the earth. We trust there is another tribunal in our land, at which this deed will not escape the unqualified condemnation it deserves. We are sure the public sentiment of the civilized world will pronounce it an unparalleled atrocity.

This infamous outrage has called out more expressions of indignation from all parts of the non-slaveholding states of this confederacy, than were ever heard on any other occasion excepting one. The tidings of this outrage have gone forth to every part of the inhabited earth, borne thither by the white winged messengers that fly continually from our shores in every direction over the great waters. Ere this the shameful story has been told in Liverpool, London, Paris; flashed thence with lightning speed to every important city on the Continent of Europe, and is now going post haste to the British possessions in India. So that in a few weeks the report of our disgrace will have gone around the world. The fact will have been told everywhere—that liberty of speech has been stricken down in the Senate of these United States, and that that august body has

declared itself helpless in the premises ; unable to obtain any redress for its injured member ; or to give any assurance to others, that they shall be protected in the exercise of their freedom, in the debates that may hereafter arise in that hall. The fearful fact will, send discouragement to the hearts of those, who have cherished the faith that the people of a country are capable of self-government, and been wont to point to this Republic as a bright confirmation of that faith. It will increase the assurance of Despots, Kings and Aristocrats, in maintaining that they alone are fit, or have the right *to rule*. Already you may hear it murmured, that the great experiment begun by our fathers in 1776 is a failure ; and, under present appearances, there are none of us, who can say it is not so. But I trust in the God of our fathers, that the great principles for which they dared and endured so much, will be saved ; though it may be so as by the fires of Revolution. May our repentance avert that dire calamity.

I have intimated that one other, and only one other, event has ever awakened in this land a public indignation similar to that, which is now thrilling every heart not seared and hardened by the touch of slavery. I alluded to the treachery of Benedict Arnold. No deed but his, in all our history, is stamped with such ineffable meanness and cowardice as well as perfidy to one's country, as is that stealthy and murderous assault upon Mr. Sumner. The name of Preston S. Brooks is destined to an infamy as black as that, which has settled forever upon the name of Benedict Arnold. True, there are many minions of our American Despots at the

south, and not a few at the north, who make a show of commending the perpetrator of that outrage upon all freedom of speech; so were there servants of the British Monarch, who instigated the traitor at West Point, and tried to applaud his attempt; but in their hearts they despised it and him. He was, I grant, rewarded by a pension from the British Government; but he was left to live upon it as long as he might and to die *in obscurity*. No epitaph, that may have been chiseled upon his grave stone, will ever be seen so distinctly as this which is writ there by the finger of public scorn. "*The Traitor; he availed himself of his high official position to attempt the overthrow of the liberties of his country.*" This same accusation will attach forever to the memory of Preston S. Brooks. If the miserable in the world beyond the grave love company—the execrated traitor of the Revolution must be moved with joy to meet this fellow at his coming—crying "ha! ha! ha! here at last, is one like unto myself!" The spirit of Brooks' deed was no less dastardly than that of Arnold's; and the tendency of it is equally disastrous; nay, more so. The delivery to the British army, of the most important military post of the American Patriots, in the very height of their Revolutionary struggle, would not have been so fatal to the cause of liberty, as would be the suppression of freedom of speech on the floor of Congress.

The friends of humanity, the opponents of slavery, the champions of the Declaration of Independence, have no wish to deal with carnal weapons—such as lacerate and maim, and kill the bodies of their adversaries. All



such belong to savages, who are creatures of passion, and not of reason. The defenders of the God given rights of man carry their arms and ammunition in their heads and hearts; not in their hands and feet or pockets. They purpose to wield only the sword of truth; to beat down an antagonist with facts and arguments; to penetrate his heart with the sharp point of an apt illustration. Perhaps some champion of the right, more skilful than the rest, may sometimes flay his man with the keen blade of satire; or may blow him up by an explosion of ridicule. But all such weapons can do the sufferer no harm; nay, they shall make him better, if they impel him to let his errors go; for it is against his errors not him, that such weapons are intended to be used. These weapons all, not excepting the two last mentioned, all are perfectly legitimate in our conflicts for the true and the right. Not merely facts and arguments, but *satire* and *ridicule*, though dangerous instruments, may and must sometimes be applied. Error and wrong, especially such a tremendous system of wrong as American Slavery, and the attempted defences of it, are full of inconsistencies, often exceedingly ridiculous; and many errorists, who cannot feel the force of an argument, who evade the point of a fact, or blunt it by a counter statement, are exceedingly sensitive to the touch of satire, or the exposure of ridicule. If, therefore, these weapons are *fairly and honorably used*, they are exceedingly effective, as well as perfectly legitimate; and no man may justly complain though they penetrate to the core of his heart, and divide even his joints from their marrow. If any one suffers so much as this, it must be because he has espoused unrighteous-

ness; has mistaken darkness for light, evil for good. The sooner therefore he renounces his error, the better for himself as well as for every body else.

Wherever the defenders of any cause misapply these intellectual and moral weapons of attack and defence, they expose themselves and their cause to discomfiture by the same weapons in the hands of their opponents. The sword of truth is two-edged. The *retort* of satire and ridicule, justly laid on, cuts deeper and stings more bitterly than that which provoked it. No man, on either side of a question, may justly complain if these weapons are fairly used against him. Satire and ridicule cannot wound where they do not apply. Whenever on either side, in a debate, these weapons are cruelly or unfairly used, the injured party will find ample redress in the exposure of that unfairness; in the hearty sympathy of all honorable minds; and in the prejudice which disingenuousness, sophistry and abuse always awaken against him and his cause, who resorts to either.

Whoever therefore attempts to repel an argument by a bludgeon, bowie knife or pistol, confesses that he has been beaten in the *honorable* encounter. Whoever sets about to revenge, as it were a personal insult, any *just* criticism of his words, however scathing it may be, or however ridiculous it may make him appear, acknowledges to all the world that he has been made *conscious* of his ignorance or his folly.

Under a government like ours, which rests ultimately upon the opinion and will of the people, great latitude must be allowed in the examination of every public measure; yes, the utmost freedom of speech, that may be

necessary to bring out all the wisdom of the people in reference to it. Especially in our Halls of Legislation, where it is expected the public idea of right will be converted into the law of the state or the nation—in our Halls of Legislation, we have understood it to be an established principle, that no restrictions shall be put upon freedom of speech, excepting such as would exclude all obscenity, profanity, and abusive personalities—such restrictions as a proper regard for its own character would justify such a body in enforcing. Any member of either of the legislative bodies of our States or of the Republic, may call any one who is speaking, to order, for what he deems an impropriety. The whole body will then decide whether it be an impropriety or not.—If the words spoken are denounced as indecorous—then the offending member is expected to recall them, or to make such other amends as the offended body may require. But no legislator is to be called to account for what he has said in debate, *any where but in the Hall where he said it*, or in any manner but such as the body may prescribe. This has been the established principle and usage. No other restrictions upon liberty of speech—freedom in debate, has it been thought necessary or safe to impose.

No quarter has been asked for, or given to any man's opinions, statements, or arguments, any further than that which bars his opponent from any imputation upon his veracity. It is to be taken for granted that every legislator believes what he says in debate; but then any other member of the same body may go on and expose to the uttermost the error of his statements, the folly or wickedness of his opinions.

It is obvious, at a glance, that a democratic government cannot be maintained without liberty of speech, and freedom of the press. The abuses of such liberties, it is true, are often great, and they are very mischievous. They must be guarded against as best they can be—and their recurrence prevented, by the dissemination of so much information, and of such sentiments of honor, propriety and brotherly kindness as will frown down every unseemly word, every act that would desecrate the sanctuary of our nation's very existence.

That this desecration of the sanctuary of our freedom—this attempt to punish a member of our national Legislature for advocating the inalienable rights of man, is approved generally by the slave-holding oligarchy, must be inferred from the tone of the Southern Press; and from the acts of some of the high officials of the Southern States. I need not recount to you the numberless articles that have appeared in the leading newspapers at the South; the enthusiastic resolutions that have been passed by large assemblies there, all commending the deed of Preston S. Brooks—nor of the elegant and significant tokens of public gratitude that have been presented to him. It is proclaimed to the world how the slaveholders *are glorying in their shame* and their country's downfall. This is Southern Chivalry. This is the completion of that intellectual and moral culture—this the height of that refinement which the “peculiar institution of the South” gives to those who are reared under its “*benign*,” its “*patriarchal*” influence. Jefferson foreshadowed it in his “Notes on Virginia.”

Ought we to expect any thing better from slavehold-

ers—from those who make merchandise of men, who desecrate wantonly all the ties of domestic life, trample under their feet the God-given rights of humanity, hold and treat their fellow beings, yes, *their own offspring*, as domesticated brutes? Humanity is one; and the man who would rob a new-born babe, in the obscurest hut on a southern plantation, of his birth-right; batter out the image of God inscribed upon that child, and brand him as a piece of his property; would make you or me a slave, if it answered his purpose so to do, and he had the power. Long ago ought we, each one of us, and every man and woman at the north—to have felt and said to the slaveholders—“inasmuch as ye are doing this great wrong to one of the least of these my brethren, ye are doing it unto me.” Ye cannot make or keep a man a slave, without harming me, infringing upon my liberty. But alas, we have not “remembered those in bonds as bound with them”—and therefore has this great evil come upon us. The Abbe La Mennais has somewhere said, “If we stand by consentingly, while the chain is fastened to a fellow being, we sha’l ere long find the other end of the same chain riveted somewhere to ourselves.” Such is the justice of the Heavenly Father, who is no respecter of persons; blessed be his name! Mr. Garrison and his fellow laborers have been diligently preaching this doctrine for more than a quarter of a century. But they have been despised, reproached, persecuted. And now see here the truth of their often reiterated declaration that *Liberty cannot dwell with Slavery*.

I shall be glad Mr. Sumner was struck down in the Senate Chamber, and I am sure he will never regret it,

if the blows that felled him, may but arouse the people of the non-slaveholding States to a consciousness of the fearful predicament, into which their consenting with slaveholders has brought them. If there be not life enough in the northern people to be awakened now—no latent love of liberty to be enkindled by this assault from slavery—If there be not sufficient union of sentiment, and regard for the rights of man to bring them to act in concert at the coming election—to speak with one accord and more emphatically than by words, for freedom in debate, freedom of the press, freedom of the soil, and freedom for all the inhabitants of the land every where; if this crowning insult, outrage, does not rouse the people to *commence* at least an entire change in the laws of the land, and the administration of the national government, then will it be manifest, that we have become vassals of the southern oligarchy; servilely bound to their service by chains of gold, and chains of party, which nothing can break but the convulsions of a sanguinary revolution.

Men and Brethren do you say again, what shall we do in this fearful crisis?

I answer, first of all, if it be possible in such brief space as the case admits, let us bring the public sentiment of the north so to bear, that Preston S. Brooks who is now under arrest shall be fully and fairly tried for assault and battery, with intent to commit murder. We owe this to our northern civilization. We do not carry, nor allow our citizens to carry arms in their hands or deadly weapons upon their persons, because we have pledged to the individual the protection of the state. We say to every one, if you are injured, avenge not yourself, the arm of

law is stretched out over you, and justice shall be done between you and your assailant. In this spirit, and under this ægis, we send our representatives and senators to the Capital—the common home of the nation. We are bound therefore to see that they are protected there by the same means that, in the light of our higher civilization, we see to be best—not leaving them to the necessity of falling back upon the savage custom that prevails in our southern states. If the felon Brooks shall be thus brought to the punishment he richly merits—a punishment not severer than would be promptly inflicted upon any poor, ignorant, passionate private citizen, who should attack his fellow in the streets—it will be an evidence to us that all is not lost; that the despotism of slave holders is not quite absolute out of their own States; that there is a remnant of law to which they must succumb. But if there be not virtue and strength enough, at the very seat of our government, to bring such an assassin to punishment, surely the people ought to know it, and be made to realize that there is no hope left, but in *the utter dissolution of our union with slaveholders.*

2.—Whatever may be the result of the trial at Washington, every honorable effort should be made to put the administration of our government into the hands of very different men from those who have had it since the death of General Taylor. All should be done that fairly can be, to bring the people to vote for liberty and not for slavery; so to vote as to ensure the redemption of Kansas from the ruthless trample of the oppressors of men. That is the first thing our hands find to do. Let us do it with our might. The slaveholders have broken through

the Missouri Compromise. We must meet them at that breach, and drive them back from the soil consecrated to freedom. If successful there, as we easily may be if united, we may and must go on to other conquests, by the peaceable means for the removal of every wrong, provided in the civil and religious institutions of our country, until there shall not be left within our borders a vestige of slavery. We have been taught by bitter experience, that no compromise can be safely, any more than righteously, made with this system of monstrous wrong. It is absurd not less than iniquitous—the attempt to bind in friendly union the angel Liberty, and Slavery, the blackest fiend of Hell. There can be no more concord between them than between Christ and Belial—the light of noonday and the darkness of midnight. The one will encroach upon and drive out the other. The only question before us is, which shall prevail, Liberty or Slavery? We see in the history of our Republic that slavery can not, will not restrict itself within any boundaries. We know that Liberty, like truth, righteousness and peace, ought to be diffused over the whole earth; that every yoke ought to be broken, every captive ought to be set free.

I rejoice that the Republican Party, which now takes the lead in the political conflict for Freedom, has inscribed upon its banner not a word of concession to the oppressors of our land. Oppressors have no right to be what they are. They have no rights excepting such as are common to all men. They have no right to hold a single fellow being in bondage a moment. If we consent that they may do so great a wrong, we become partakers of their iniquity, without, lessening their crime.



Nothing ever has been, or ever can be gained, by concessions to wrong doers—not even their confidence and respect. See how they have thrown aside, one after another of the miserably mistaken Northern men, who servilely devoted themselves to the service of slaveholders. Webster, Fillmore, Everett, Pierce, have each been treated by them with contempt.

The advocates of Slavery are bold, outspoken, we know what they are aiming to accomplish. Surely the defenders of liberty ought to be equally explicit. The slaveholders know full well that Slavery and Liberty cannot exist harmoniously under the same Government. They know that their "Peculiar Institution" cannot be maintained, if it be not acknowledged paramount to every other institution in our country. Church and State must be made subservient to its support. They are therefore obviously determined, that no other freedom shall be allowed in our Republic, that will abridge their freedom to say and to do whatever they please. Recent occurrences—the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Law, the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, the overthrow of the right of suffrage in Kansas, and the deadly assault upon liberty of speech in the Senate chamber, leave us no room to doubt, that the slaveholders will scruple at nothing, which may seem to them needful to secure their ascendancy in the government of our country. The question now before the people of the North is, will you maintain your own freedom? or will you consent to be enslaved personally or politically? You have allowed the oligarchs of the South to trample upon the rights of the least of your brethren, and now you find they have clutched you, and are about to bind you to their service.

Will you submit, or will you nobly withstand their demand? This is the question. And your first answer is to be given at the Polls in November next. If you will have free soil, a free press, free speech, and be yourselves free men—then go to the polls and vote for Fremont.—This is but the beginning of the great work of reform, of national repentance, that we have to do. Let this be well done—and then may we go on rejoicing to the end. If we fail in this first step—we may well despair of our Republic—and expect nothing better than the utter dissolution of the Union—and that too by the means of the most horrible of all expedients, a civil war.

So unprincipled, so heartless has been the policy of the great political parties, the Whigs and the Democrats, that, for the last twenty-five years, I have identified myself with neither; and very seldom voted with either. I despaired of the preservation of the Union; and long ago was fully persuaded, that it ought not to be maintained upon the conditions which the abettors of Slavery prescribed.

But now a party has arisen, forced into being by the great emergency, which seems to hold out to our sinking land some hope of deliverance. It has not, indeed, promised in advance that it will do all, that I know must be done to make our salvation sure. But it has not foreclosed its future action, in any particular, or to any extent, that may be found necessary to make the triumph of Liberty complete.

The opposing, the Democratic party, seemed resolved at Cincinnati to leave the slaveholding oligarchy no room to distrust its utter subserviency to their interest. All

that has ever been heartless, cruel, inhuman, demoralizing in the spirit of either of the old parties, for the last twenty-five years, seems to be concocted into the Platform laid down at Cincinnati, as the basis of the Democratic party. I cannot see how a man who has any self-respect—any regard for the dearest rights of humanity, can consent to act with a party, that avows such principles and intentions.

As to the rival candidates, Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Fremont, I know neither of them personally, but am obliged to rely, as most of their fellow-citizens must, upon the accounts that are given of them by friends and foes.

I am very willing to concede, and glad to believe, that there may be no noticable faults in the private life of the Hon. James Buchanan. But he is before us as a statesman; and his public acts are well known. He has, for a long series of years, devoted himself to the service of slaveholders; and now he has given himself up, body and soul, to the justification of the Fugitive Slave Law; of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise; of the Border Ruffianism, which has desolated Kansas; of the suppression of all debate upon the subject of Slavery in the Halls of Congress; and of the perpetuation of Slavery—the well-known source of all these national woes. Mr. Buchanan stepped at once, with evident alacrity, upon the Platform laid down at Cincinnati. He took no exception to any sentiment or purpose in it. He presumed not to have an opinion or a wish diverse to those expressed by his Party.—He renounced his personality,\* and avowed himself, as it were, the embodiment of all the atrocious principles set forth in that document. Whoever, therefore, shall vote

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\*See his speech to his fellow-citizens of Wheatland.

the ticket of the Democratic Party, will vote not for the Hon. James Buchanan, excellent man though he may be, so much as for the impersonation of all the political and social unrighteousness, propounded in the Cincinnati platform.

Hon. John C. Fremont is a man in the very prime of life, full of physical, intellectual and moral vigor. He has an opinion of his own; a reason too for what he thinks; and he will not be the unquestioning tool of a Party.—He has an individuality like Gen. Taylor, and Gen. Jackson. He is distinguished above every conspicuous one of his cotemporaries, if we except perhaps Dr. Kane, for his spirit of daring enterprise, heroic courage, indomitable will in the pursuance of his object, and of calm self-reliance in the hour of utmost peril. By the death of his father, and the maternal cares of his widowed mother, Col. Fremont was, in early life, thrown upon his own resources, and was left to form his own character, and shape his own fortune. He is, therefore, one of those whom we commonly call self-made men, that means one of those men who have not enjoyed the highest collegiate or academical advantages, but has been educated in the school of experience—the best of teachers, though no university has ever given her a Doctorate.

He has not been brought up in the hot-bed of political partyism, nor in the stew of our National Capital.—He has lived much, as his name implies, in the free air of the mountain, engaged in the manly, invigorating employment of an explorer. His letters and official reports show abundantly, that he has a mind disposed to accurate observation, and capable of careful discrimination.

Indeed the labors to which Col. Fremont has been called; the hardships he has had to endure; the dangers he has been wont to encounter in his frontier life, resemble very closely those of our venerated Washington. This resemblance awakens in our bosoms the hope—aye, the belief that in the good providence of God, by similar influences, this man has been raised up to be what Washington was, *the man needed by our country in the hour of her utmost peril.*

Let us then, Fellow Citizens, on this day of our nation's political birth, overshadowed as we are by dark portents of evil—let us pledge ourselves to each other and to our countrymen, that we will do all we can to inaugurate the commencement of our political regeneration. Let us pledge ourselves to do what we may, by all honorable means, to ensure the election of John C. Fremont and William L. Dayton, that we may put down the policy pursued by our General Government for the last seven years; may secure to ourselves and our countrymen every where a free press, free speech, a free pulpit, and especially a free Congress; that we may avert from all the uncontaminated soil on this Continent the blight of Slavery; exonerate ourselves from all expressed or implied obligation to assist in holding fellow-men in bondage; and in due time, by such means as are provided or allowed in the Constitution, extirpate from every part of our Republic that most atrocious system of wrong; and secure to every human being that lives within our borders, the full and equal enjoyment of all the God-given, inalienable rights of Man.